

walk 4 life miles

Advice on plotting the lines of paths before the website is launched.

We know that many of you have routes you would like to be on the website when it goes live in September. We are hoping that partners will be able to add routes in August but if you can't wait that long, or want to have a go at finding mile long route to become a Walk4Life mile this note describes how you can plot routes using Google maps so that you can supply us with a digital file.

The process is actually quite simple, but writing it down makes it look very difficult – if you have any questions, or want to talk it through ring our very friendly and helpful expert Abi on 07914 273271.

When the website is launched it will be very easy to plot routes directly onto there – it is not necessary to use Google – this advice is just for people who want to provide routes now.

Which routes ?

You can plot any route you like pre-launch. This can include potential Walk4Life Miles, short walks around towns or cities, rural routes, walking for health routes or whatever routes you want to share or promote. Further advice on routes is available in Toolkit 1 - identifying routes on our website www.walkengland.org.uk

If you already have GIS data which you would like to send us please see Toolkit part 3 - providing digital data.

What do you need to do when you have plotted a route?

When you have plotted a route you will need to save it as a .kml file (we'll tell you how to do this below). This is the standard format Google uses to save files.

How to plot a route

The steps below summarise what you need to do – we have shown these steps in the related document “How to digitise routes in Google my maps” which shows a screen shot of each point. We recommend that you follow that document the first few times, and ring us if you get stuck !

The steps to follow are :

1. Go to Google and select “maps”

2. Click on “my maps” – you will have to log in at this stage – if you have not done so before you will need to create a user name and password

3. Click on “create a new map” It is important to create a new map for each route, to keep them separate. Once you have a few routes digitised, they appear as a list down the left-hand side

4. Give your route a name and – if it useful to you – a description. Give it a name in all lower case, without using any punctuation or spaces. Use an underscore _ for a space. This name has to exactly match the one in the spreadsheet (we’ll explain about the spreadsheet further down). This is the file name – it can be whatever you want. Neither the file name nor the description will show on the website.

5. Set the toggle button to be “unlisted” (the default is public). Then press “save”

6. Use the “search maps” bar or the hand pan to find where your route starts. The best way to see where the path goes is to find it on the aerial photography – to do this switch to ‘satellite’ view. If you can’t see where the path is, try switching back to ‘map’ view. In open places the map view is probably not detailed enough to use, although it will be fine in towns.

If you can’t find your path either on the satellite picture or the street view you will have to wait until the website is launched which has a better mapping facility. Try another route instead !

7. You can start plotting your route using the “draw line” button. Place the cursor at the start of the route and start moving along the path, tracing what you can see along the aerial view. Put a regular left-mouse click along the route to keep it accurate, especially around bends. Google My Maps shows the route you are plotting with a blue line. All the while it is measuring in feet (1 mile = 5280 feet). To scroll the map along whilst you are plotting, simply press down the left mouse button and hold it down – this allows you to pan. Release the mouse to carry on adding nodes on each click.

9. When you have finished, click again in your last point to finish the route. Google asks you to name it again. You can put the name here again if you like – but the main name to get right was the one in step 4, for the map as a whole.

10. The total distance of the route automatically appears in the box that pops up (in feet if less than a mile, in miles if more than a mile)

11. If you are happy, press OK and then save.

12. Press “link”. A box will pop up with an option to paste link in email or paste HTML. Select past to email and copy (by right clicking on you mouse) the text that is in the box.

13. Open a new tab in your internet browser, and paste the text you have just copied into the address line. Add the words “&output=kml” to the end of the text you just added and press

return. You should see the file you just created in Google earth. You can now save the file onto your computer. (if you get stuck at this point give Abi a call !)

14. Check that the file name is absolutely correct : all lower case, no spaces, no punctuation, exactly as it is spelt in the spreadsheet. Again remember, there is a separate column for a more friendly name, what matters here is that the kml file name and the kml column in the spreadsheet exactly match.

15. If you want to delete and start again then either delete from the current view,

16. Or press “done” and “my maps” to return to the start.

17. To start the next route, click on “create new map” again.

18. We recommend that you send your first file to us to check – just to make sure it is all okay.

Email the .kml file to abi.mansley@walkengland.org.uk. Once we know it is working you can carry on and do as many as you like.

Hints and tips

- Start with a route you know well, it is easier to get the hang of plotting in an area you know.
- Make sure you have a good mouse plugged in before you start – it’s easier than a touch-pad on a laptop.
- To make corrections, when the route is in edit mode, you will see all the nodes as squares or circles. You can easily drag these with the mouse to a new position. Google my maps adds another node each time you drag so you have plenty to play with!
- If your path is entirely on pavements or roads you can snap it to the road, which is a neat way of going round all the corners. But if any part of it is off roads you will need the normal “draw line” tool.

Completing the spreadsheet

The data needs to be accompanied by the excel spreadsheet which should have a line of information for each route.

The spreadsheet accompanies this note. We have entered a few rows of sample data to help you understand how it works – please delete these before you start to add your routes.

Partner name – Please add the name of your organisation into this column. You will need to repeat it for each line of data. Your name will not show on the website, but adding it here means that the

routes will be attributed to you, and we will be able to give you feedback on use of those routes later.

Filename – take care to record the filename carefully – it must be identical to the filename of the route, including the .kml extension at the end. Filenames should be all lowercase, with no punctuation or spaces (but you can use underscores instead of spaces if you like). The filename will not show on the website.

All of the rest of the data can be changed through the website once it is live. You will have access to your routes and will be able to add to them, or to alter the information.

Route name – This is the name which will show on the website. It can have spaces and capital letters.

Walk4Life Mile – if the route is to be a Walk4Life Mile please enter 'TRUE' in this box. If it is not, or if you are not sure please enter FALSE. This can be changed at any time when the data is on the website.

Is it Walk4Life Mile waymarked ? – If special Walk4Life waymarkers are up enter 'TRUE' – if not enter 'FALSE'. You will be able to change this on the website later.

Is it flat ? - If the route is flat (for example along an old railway line, or canal tow path) enter 'TRUE' – if you are not sure, or it isn't enter 'FALSE'.

Is it uninterrupted ? – Enter 'TRUE' if the route has no road crossings, gates, stiles or other places where someone would have to stop walking. If you are not sure enter 'FALSE'.

Have hazards been identified ? – if they have then enter 'TRUE' and add a note to describe any potential hazards in the 'notes' column. If there are no hazards then enter 'TRUE' but you don't need to say anything more. Otherwise enter 'FALSE'

Is it a WfH route ? – If the route is used by a Walking for Health group for led walks then enter 'TRUE' in the box. This will give the route a WfH logo, and allow people to find out more about the Walking for Health group. If you know when the led walks take place then you can add any details in the "notes" column

Tags – these are descriptive words to help people searching for specific routes. You can add as many, or as few as you like to describe your route, we have given a few examples. Try to think of words that people may use to find a route of interest to them. Use a comma between each tag. They will not show on the website.

Notes – The text entered in here will show on the website exactly as you type it. Use this box to describe any potential hazards, or any information you would like people to know. If you are a Walking for Health group you can use this box to tell people where or when you meet, or the name of your group.

Url – if you have a website which give more information about the route you can add it here. You can add a small amount of text too, for example “This route is promoted by xxxx – find out more at www.xxxx.org.uk “

You can add information to routes once they are on the website – including attaching a pdf file if you want to. The most important data we need at this stage is the file name, route name and tags ... the rest can easily be added later.

Exporting existing data

If you already have data in a digital format you may be able to provide to us directly – check out Toolkit 4, or give Abi a call.

If you need any advice on how to export to kml, or how to digitise routes, or the spreadsheet contact abi.mansley@walkengland.org.uk or call her on 07914 273271.

Walk4life – plotting pre-launch
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